

To Whom This May Concern At The FCC,

The fact that Comcast and other incumbent ISPs annually raise rates for their broadband Internet access services just because they can -- and that Comcast is preparing to do so as The National Broadband Plan is set to be unveiled should give us pause for a moment to reflect on what this means and require prompt action to prevent this from happening. After all if ISP bills keep rising each year just because the ISP can charge more Internet will become more and more unaffordable. Today Internet in the U.S. looks like a privilege this while the countries of Europe which have mandated competition in broadband Internet access and affordability have made Internet a universal right in those countries for all people to have access to. The National Broadband Plan must address these problems and for the National Broadband Plan to be successful the FCC and Congress must work to correct these issues. At this time a similar problem is occurring with healthcare as private, corrupt and greedy health insurance companies raise medical premiums each year faster than wages just because they can. Thus healthcare reform has emerged to stop future increases; there is in fact a moral imperative and an economic imperative to doing that. The National Broadband Plan must: 1) mandate competition so there can be more choices and often better choices for consumers 2) mandate affordability 3) make clear a national commitment to protect Net Neutrality and require all ISPs practice nondiscriminatory reasonable network management. 4) encourage innovation however, possible through lower regulation and lower taxes (when possible -- complete deregulation, allowing mega mergers etc are out of the question but minimal deregulation when the market is competitive can occur) right now we need more regulation as the market is anti-competitive.

A similar problem of higher prices is occurring in the market for health insurance with private, corrupt and greedy, for profit insurers raising medical premiums every year faster than wages -- thus Congress and President Obama are working toward healthcare reform which now must be passed for 2 reasons a moral imperative and an economic one.

The National Broadband Plan while welcome if the stated goal of extending access to those currently on the wrong side of the Digital Divide is to take place must include regulations to mandate competition and affordability so as consumers have more and often better choices for access. Line sharing requirements for incumbent ISPs in some circumstances must be required, and they should and must be required to resell at wholesale prices broadband Internet access to smaller ISPs like NetZero to then resell cheaply to their own customers at more affordable prices. Unnecessary bandwidth caps by cable company ISPs meant to prevent online competition to their digital cable TV business from emerging or similar caps by big telecoms like AT&T to prevent VOIP services from taking off must be disallowed as part of Net Neutrality non discrimination rules and metered billing schemes for Internet rejected as all people should have equal access to the Internet regardless of income level.

Let's review here are a few things that should be included in the National Broadband Plan:

- 1) Mandate increased competition to cable company and phone company ISP duopoly
- 2) Mandate affordability
- 3) Encourage innovation where and when possible by reducing regulations (this should only be done in a competitive market which Internet access is not now but once it is minimal deregulation is okay provided rules preventing mega mergers aren't lifted again to allow a duopoly to ever form again) and lowering taxes etc.

People often left on the wrong side of the Digital Divide meet the following criteria:

- 1) are in a minority group
- 2) have limited income (are poorer than those who have broadband Internet access)
- 3) live in rural areas (often unserved with no ISP in their area or if there is one again they cannot afford to pay for Internet)

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act aside from authorizing funding for roadways and other transportation infrastructure projects like building high speed rail, and investing in clean energy projects that can produce green collar jobs set aside some stimulus funding for expanding IT infrastructure and thus extending broadband deployment to improve Internet access in under-served areas and extend it to unserved areas. This provision allowing public funds to be used for Internet related projects was included in the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 that passed last year by Congress (and was signed into law by President Obama) with the proviso that any and all ISPs accepting public money for broadband projects must respect Net Neutrality. Of course the Recovery Act also provided money for states, provided some tax cuts for taxpayers, extended jobless financial benefits for at least another six months (benefits were extended in fact throughout the year 2009), extended COBRA health benefits to the unemployed etc and did quite a few other good things but my mentioning of the Recovery Act here today is to share with you the fact this blueprint for economic recovery through government run economic stimulus has provided authorization for public funds to be used to extend broadband deployment in the country so more people who don't have it can gain access to high speed Internet.

Internet in under-served areas needs to improve but the unserved areas also need to become served. A National Broadband Plan may be ambitious and challenging to develop and enact but could be a good thing for the country. By closing the Digital Divide we can create hundreds of thousands or even millions of new jobs.

So crafting, publishing and releasing a National Broadband Plan to Congress and the American

public while nice is insufficient -- the goals contained within this plan for how many more people should have access by 2020 or 2040 need to be met and cannot be met without action to create the conditions that will allow them to be met.

Breakup incumbent phone and cable company ISPs as needed and prevent anti-competitive, anti-consumer mega mergers. Put a people powered Internet first!